

system for receiving therein said game information storage medium to execute an image display game program; and an external information reading circuitry provided in one of said game information storage medium and said game machine for reading data recorded in said game card, said game card comprising:

a visually portrayed figure of a character for use in playing a card game,

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a machine readable recording of at least an identification code of the character and characteristic data related to said character, and

wherein said characteristic data is disposed on said card such that it can be read by said external information reading circuitry and used in an electronic game played on said game machine, and

wherein said game card includes, in a machine-readable manner, printed dots distributed within blocks each of which has a predetermined area, and by printing the dots with different distributions, at least the identification data and the character data are machine-readably recorded on said game card.--

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject patent application are respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 6, 10, and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The above amendments are believed to address the Section 112 issues raised on pages 2 and 3 of the office action and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15-17, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30-33, 35, 36, 38, 44, 46-49, 51, 54 and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Nomi (U.S. Patent No. 5,791,988) in view of Garfield (U.S. Patent No. 5,662,332). Claims 8, 14, 19,

20, 34, 50 and 56 were rejected as allegedly being obvious over the Nomi-Garfield combination in further view of Doederlien *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,855,001). Claim 18 was rejected as allegedly being obvious over the Nomi-Garfield combination in further view of Hollerith cards and Eskilden (U.S. Patent No. 5,962,839). Claims 26, 29, 39-43, and 45 were rejected as allegedly being obvious over the Nomi-Garfield combination in further view of Bronstein (U.S. Patent No. 4,386,773). While not acquiescing in these rejections, claims 1, 7-16, 18-28, 31, 36-38, 43, 44 and 51 have been amended. As such, the applied references are discussed with reference to the amended claims.

Nomi describes a computer gaming device allowing use of physical gaming pieces when playing against a computer. In one implementation, a human player deals cards face down to positions representing computer players. The cards include machine-readable identifiers 54 in addition to the normal markings. The human player then submits the dealt cards face down to a card reader in a pre-ordained order, replacing the cards face down in that order. The bidding, betting, and playing commences as in a normal card game, with the computer player or players indicating information output such as betting amounts, bidding amounts and which card to play through computer information outputs such as video display screens and dedicated display outputs. In Nomi, the cards have values that are fed by the card reader to the computer. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Nomi of cards which visually portray a character and include at least identification data of the character and characteristic data relating to a characteristic of the associated character, wherein the identification data and characteristic data is read by external information reading circuitry and the characteristic data is processed to apply a change to the original content of the game program stored in a game information storage medium as set forth in claim 1. In accordance with the game system of claim 1, it is possible, for example, to

increase the ability of a character in a game stored on the game information storage medium by applying the characteristic data read from the game card. Nomi does not even remotely contemplate such ability.

Garfield discloses a card game that utilizes trading cards. Garfield discloses that the game can be used on electronic devices such as computers, video games, electronic games and interactive networks in which the cards are visually displayed and manipulated. *See, e.g.*, col. 19, lines 41-50. This is a fundamentally different approach than that described in Nomi in which physical gaming pieces are used when playing against a computer. Thus, the combination of Nomi and Garfield is inappropriate. In addition, even were the proposed combination made, it would not provide a game system in which identification data and characteristic data are read by external information reading circuitry and the characteristic data is processed to apply a change to the original content of a game program stored in a game information storage medium. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that the combination of Nomi and Garfield does not render obvious the subject matter of claim 1 or its dependent claims 7-12.

Independent claim 13 is directed to a game system in which a game program based on the game program stored in a game information storage medium is executed when an identification code and characteristic data from a card is not supplied and in which a game program is executed and character data of a particular character is processed when an identification code and characteristic data of the particular character is supplied. Neither Nomi nor Garfield teaches or suggests such a feature. It is alleged in the office action that column 3, lines 16-18 of Nomi discloses a game not using a card. However, this portion of Nomi simply indicates that the game pieces are not limited to cards, but can include dice, a chip, a coin, a domino, etc. There is no disclosure of playing different games on the game machine according to the use/non-use of game

pieces such as game cards. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 13 and its dependent claims 14 and 15 are not rendered obvious by the proposed combination of Nomi and Garfield.

Independent claim 16 is directed to a game card which comprises a visually portrayed figure of a character for use in playing a card game, and a machine readable recording of at least an identification code of the character and characteristic data related to said character, wherein the characteristic data includes ability data visually recognizably printed on the game card and hidden data not visually recognizably printed on the game card. For example, as described at page 9 of the specification, this "hidden data" may be data concerning items capable of using magic or turning into an unrivaled state in a certain time. Neither Nomi nor Garfield discloses such an arrangement. In Nomi, only card values that are visually recognizable from the card are machine-readably recorded on the card. Garfield discloses only cards with printed data thereon. Even it were erroneously alleged that Nomi and Garfield could have somehow been combined, it would not have resulted in a game card having hidden data not visually recognizable on the card. For at least these reasons, claim 16 and its dependent claims 18-24 are not rendered obvious by the combination Nomi and Garfield.

Applicants note that Hollerith cards and/or Eskilden (U.S. Patent No. 5,962,839), among other things, do not remedy the deficiencies of Nomi and Garfield with respect to claim 16. The existence of cards for computer programs and the programming of a programmable apparatus using barcodes does not remedy the deficiencies of Nomi and/or Garfield and does not render obvious, for example, a game card including ability data visually recognizably printed on the game card and hidden data not visually recognizably printed on the game card.

Independent claim 25 is directed to a game information storage medium which includes a

first game program memory section for storing a first program for playing a game to display characters in an image display game, and a second game program memory section for storing a second program for executing a game using characteristic data to be added to the first game program when supplied with data read from a game card by external information reading circuitry. Neither Nomi nor Garfield discloses such an arrangement. Nomi discloses a program implementing a card game, but contains no disclosure or remote suggestion of game information storage medium including two memory sections as claimed. Garfield simply discloses a card game and has nothing to do with a game information storage medium as claimed. For at least these reasons, claim 25 and its dependent claims 26 and 27 are not rendered obvious by the proposed combination of Nomi and Garfield.

Claim 28 is directed to a game system that includes a game information storage medium comprising a memory storing a game program for playing a game related to said game card and reading circuitry for reading information from said game card and a game machine for removably receiving therein the game information storage medium. It is readily apparent from inspection of the disclosures of Nomi and Garfield that neither discloses or suggests a game machine that removably receives a game information storage medium, much less one in which the game information storage medium includes reading circuitry for reading information from a game card. The office action alleges that because Nomi teaches that the invention described therein can be implemented on a number of different types of computers; because home video game systems use cartridges; and because home video game systems are popular, it would have been obvious to have mounted the card reader on a removable cartridge. There is however no evidence to support this conclusory obviousness determination. Indeed, Applicants submit that Nomi would have suggested providing the card reader on the console of a video game system,

not on a removable cartridge. For at least these reasons, claim 28 and its dependent claims 29-38 are not rendered obvious by the proposed combination of Nomi and Garfield.

Claim 39 is directed to a removable memory for a game system comprising a program memory for storing a game program involving cards and a data reader for reading data from at least one card. As noted above, it is readily apparent from inspection of the disclosures of Nomi and Garfield that neither discloses or suggests a removable memory including a program memory and a data reader. Bronstein discloses a game cartridge but there is no disclosure or suggestion that such a game cartridge include a data reader for reading data from at least one card. Accordingly, even if these references were combined as proposed, it would not result in the subject matter of claim 39 or its dependent claims 40-43.

Independent claim 44 is directed to a game system comprising a game machine including a processing system for executing an image display game program, wherein a portion of the image display program is stored in said game information storage medium and a portion of the image display program is obtained from the at least one game card. Nothing in Nomi or Garfield teaches or suggests that portions of an image display program be stored in a game information storage medium and a game card. Accordingly, claim 44 and its dependent claims 45-50 are not rendered obvious by the proposed combination of Nomi and Garfield.

Independent claim 51 is directed to a game system comprising a processing system for executing a card related image display game program, wherein at least a portion of the card related image display program is stored in said game information storage medium and the processing system is operable to process graphics image data embodied in a two-dimensional array of dots. Nothing in either Nomi or Garfield teaches or suggests a processing system which processes graphics image data from a two-dimensional array of dots on a game card.


Accordingly, claim 51 and its dependent claims 52-56 are not rendered obvious by the proposed combination of Nomi and Garfield.

New claims 57-62 are added for the Examiner's consideration. The subject matter of these new claims is fully supported by the original disclosure and no new matter is added. It is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of these new claims is not taught or suggested by the applied references, taken either alone or in combination.

For the reasons set forth above, the subject application is believed to be in condition for allowance and prompt notification to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 7-16, 18-28, 31, 36-38, 43, 44 and 51 have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A game system comprising:

a plurality of game cards for use in a card game, each visually portraying a figure of a character and including recorded [storing] data [for use in a card game],

a game information storage medium storing a game program relating to game card character figures,

a game machine including a processing system for removably receiving therein the game information storage medium to execute an image display game program,

said plurality of game cards recording [storing], for each of the characters depicted, at least identification data of the characters and characteristic data relating to a characteristic of an associated character;

wherein one of said game information storage medium and said game machine includes [including] external information reading circuitry for reading the identification data and characteristic data of the characters [character] recorded on [or stored in] said game cards [card]; and

said processing system, when supplied with the identification data and characteristic data read by said external information reading circuitry from one or more of said game cards, processes [processing] the characteristic data to apply a change to the original content of [in accordance with] the game program stored in said game information storage medium.

7. (Amended) A game system according to claim 1, wherein said game cards are trading cards each including a figure of a character differing in rarity value[, and

said game machine using said cards to play a game associated with the game program stored in said game information storage medium].

8. (Amended) A game system according to claim 1, wherein the characteristic data recorded [stored] on at least one of said game cards [card] includes sound data related to at least the associated character, and

wherein said processing system generates sound of the associated character on the basis of sound data read by said external information reading circuitry.

9. (Amended) A game system according to claim 1, wherein the characteristic data recorded [stored] on at least one of said game cards [card] includes text data explaining an individual feature of the associated character, and

wherein said processing system displays text data read by said external information reading circuitry on a game screen.

10. (Amended) A game system according to claim 1, wherein [said game card optically readably records by a two-dimensional array of dots] at least the identification data and characteristic data of the characters are optically readably recorded on said game cards using a two-dimensional array of dots [character in a mechanically readable recording form], and

wherein said external information reading circuitry comprises [is] an optical reader for optically reading the identification data and characteristic data of the characters [character] recorded on said game cards [card].

11. (Amended) A game system according to claim 1, wherein [said game card includes an electrically readably recording] at least the [of character] identification data and characteristic data of the characters are electronically readably recorded [character] in a non-

volatile memory [of an IC card], and

wherein said external information reading circuitry comprises [is] a reader for electrically reading the identification data and characteristic data of the characters [character] stored in said non-volatile memory of said game cards [card].

12. (Amended) A game system according to claim 1, wherein [said game card includes a magnetic recording of] at least the [character] identification data and characteristic data of the characters are magnetically recorded [character] in a magnetic recording area formed in one surface of said game cards [thereof], and

wherein said external information reading circuitry comprises [is] a magnetic reader for magnetically reading the identification data and characteristic data of the characters [character] recorded in the magnetic recording area of said game cards [card].

13. (Amended) A game system comprising:

- a plurality of collection cards, each visually portraying a figure of a character and including recorded [storing] data relating to said character;
- a game information storage medium storing a game program to display at least some of the characters portrayed on said collection cards on [in] an image display device;
- a game machine including a processing system for receiving therein said game information storage medium to execute an image display game;

wherein at least one of said collection cards includes a particular character other than a character stored in said game information storage medium and includes display data [having] recorded thereon for displaying [display data to display] a figure of the particular character, [and including] an identification code of the particular character and characteristic data of the particular character,

wherein one of said game information storage medium and said game machine further comprises [having] external information reading circuitry for reading the identification code and characteristic data recorded on said collection card,

said processing system being operable to

execute the game program based on the game program stored in said game information storage medium when the identification code and characteristic data of the particular character are not supplied by said external information reading circuitry, and to

execute the game program and process [processing] the character data of the particular character when supplied with the identification code and characteristic data of the particular character read from said external information reading circuitry, and to display the display data of the particular character during the game.

14. (Amended) A game system according to claim 13, wherein the characteristic data stored on said collection [game] card includes sound data related to at least the character, and

wherein said processing system generates sound of the character on the basis of sound data read by said external information reading circuitry.

15. (Amended) A game system according to claim 13, wherein [said game card includes as] the characteristic data[,]
includes ability data related at least to the character, and
said processing system changes a display state of the character in the game based upon ability data read by said external information reading circuitry.

16. (Amended) A game card for use in a game system including a game information storage medium storing a game program for generating at least some of the characters depicted on a plurality of such game cards on an image display device[,]; a game

machine including a processing system for receiving therein said game information storage medium to execute an image display game program[,]; and [an] external information reading circuitry provided in one of said game information storage medium and said game machine for reading data recorded in said game card, said game card comprising:

a visually portrayed figure of a character for use in playing a card game,

a machine readable recording of at least an identification code of the character and characteristic data related to said character, said characteristic data including ability data visually recognizably printed on said game card and hidden data not visually recognizably printed on said game card, and

wherein said characteristic data is disposed on said card such that it can be read by said external information reading circuitry and used in an electronic game played on said game machine.

18. (Amended) A game card according to claim 16 [17], wherein said game card further comprises additional data recorded thereon in addition to said characteristic data, the additional data including a mini-game program for playing a game which may be added to the game based on the game program stored in said game information medium, and

wherein the mini-game program [data] recorded on [in] said game card [cards] records a mini-game program for realizing a mini-game in said game card separate from the game program stored in said game information storage medium, and

wherein said game card further comprises [records] order data recorded thereon for rearranging parts of the mini-game program.

19. (Amended) A game card according to claim 16, wherein the characteristic data [recorded] includes at least sound data to generate a sound of the character, [and] ability data of

the character, and amount

[further recording, capacity] data indicating an amount [to determine a capacity] of the sound data and ability data.

20. (Amended) A game card according to claim 16, wherein the characteristic data includes at least [two kinds of data of] sound data for generating sound of the character, ability data representative of an ability of the character and text data explaining a feature of the character.

21. (Amended) A game card according to claim 16, further including additional data corresponding to the identification code of the visually portrayed [figure-depicted] character and data for determining the amount of data recorded.

22. (Amended) A game card according to claim 16, wherein said external information reading circuitry comprises [is] an optical reader for optically reading the identification data and characteristic data of the character visually portrayed on [recorded in] said game card, and

wherein said game card includes an optically readable [readably] recording of at least the identification data and characteristic data of the character comprising [including] a two-dimensional array of dots.

23. (Amended) A game card according to claim 16, wherein said external information reading circuitry comprises [is] a reader for reading the identification data and characteristic data of the visually portrayed character [stored in a non-volatile memory of said game card], and

wherein said game card includes a non-volatile memory recording at least the [an IC card

storing] identification data and characteristic data of the character.

24. (Amended) A game card according to claim 16, wherein said external information reading circuitry comprises [is] a magnetic reader for magnetically reading the identification data and characteristic data of the visually portrayed character [recorded in a magnetic memory of said game card], and

wherein said game card includes a magnetic memory provided in one surface thereof recording at least the identification data and characteristic data [formed in one surface thereof].

25. (Amended) A game information storage medium for use in a game system including a plurality of game cards for playing a card game, each card visually portraying a figure of a character and including [storing] data recorded thereon related to said character [and for playing a card game], said game information storage medium storing a game program, a game machine including a processing system for receiving therein said game information storage medium to execute an image display game program, and external information reading circuitry provided on one of said game information storage medium and said game machine to read data recorded on [in] said game card, wherein said plurality of game cards record on a character-by-character basis at least identification codes of the characters and characteristic data for representing individual aspects of the characters depicted with figures,

said game information storage medium comprising:

a first game program memory section for storing a first program for playing a game to display characters in an image display game, and

a second game program memory section for storing a second program for executing a game using said characteristic data to be added to the first game program when supplied with the identification code and characteristic data read from said external information

reading circuitry.

26. (Amended) A game information storage medium according to claim 25, wherein said information storage medium is a [an] cartridge including a semiconductor memory storing the first program and second program, and a case accommodating said semiconductor memory and integrally formed with said external information reading circuitry.

27. (Amended) A game information storage medium according to claim 25, wherein said game cards store a plurality of kinds of characteristic [individuality expressing] data on an identification-code-by-identification-code basis, and

said game information storage medium includes [including] a semiconductor [solid state] memory storing the first program and second program, a writable/readable memory for writably/readably storing at least part of the characteristic [individuality expressing] data corresponding [correspondingly] to at least part of the identification codes, and a case accommodating said semiconductor memory and writable/readable memory and integrally formed with said external information reading circuitry.

28. (Amended) A game system comprising:
a game card for use in a card game, said game card visually portraying a figure of a character and including recorded [storing] data [for use in a card game],
a game information storage medium including:
a memory storing a game program for playing a game related to said game card, and
reading circuitry for reading information from said game card; and
a game machine including a processing system for removably receiving therein the game information storage medium to execute an image display game program.

31. (Amended) A game system according to claim 28, where said game card includes identification data of the character portrayed thereon and characteristic data relating to a characteristic of the associated character[;].

36. (Amended) A game system according to claim 28, wherein said game card optically readably records by a two-dimensional array of dots at least identification data and characteristic data of the portrayed character [in a mechanically readable recording form], and wherein said reading circuitry comprises [is] an optical reader for optically reading the identification data and characteristic data of the character recorded on said game card.

37. (Amended) A game system according to claim 28, wherein said game card includes an electrically readable [readably] recording of at least of character identification data and characteristic data of the character in a non-volatile memory [of an IC card], and wherein said reading circuitry comprises [is] a reader for electrically reading the identification data and characteristic data of the character stored in said non-volatile memory of said game card.

38. (Amended) A game system according to claim 28, wherein said game card includes a magnetic recording of at least character identification data and characteristic data of the associated character in a magnetic recording area formed in one surface thereof, and wherein said reading circuitry comprises [is] a magnetic reader for magnetically reading the identification data and characteristic data of the character recorded in the magnetic recording area of said game card.

43. (Amended) A removable memory according to claim 42, wherein said removable memory comprises a [is an] cartridge including a semiconductor memory storing the

first program and second program, and a case accommodating said semiconductor memory and integrally formed with said data reader.

44. (Amended) A game system for use with at least one game card visually portraying a figure of a character and including recorded [storing] information [for use in a card game] comprising:

reading circuitry for reading information from said game card;

a game information storage medium including a memory storing a game program for playing a game related to said at least one game card; and

a game machine including a processing system for executing an image display game program, wherein a portion of said image display program is stored in said game information storage medium and a portion of the image display program is obtained from said at least one game card.

51. (Amended) A game system for use with at least one game card visually portraying a figure of a character and storing information [for use in a card game] in the form of a two dimensional array of dots comprising:

reading circuitry for reading the two dimensional array of dots from said game card;

a game information storage medium including a memory storing a game program for playing a game related to said at least one game card, and

a processing system for executing a card related image display game program, wherein at least a portion of said card related image display program is stored in said game information storage medium, said processing system being operable to process graphics image data embodied in said two-dimensional array of dots.